

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 L-03 PRS-01 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SS-20 NSC-07 H-03 INRE-00 SSO-00

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DRAFTED BY NEA/INS:RDLORTON/DKUX:MMK

APPROVED BY NEA:LBLAINGEN

SCS - MR. LIVORNESE

NEA/P/GSHERMAN

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O 282308Z JUN 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, IN

SUBJECT: HARCOS/FLETCHER

REF: (A) CALCUTTA 1318; (B) CALCUTTA 1264

1. AS HUNGER STRIKE CONTINUES AND REPORTS OF LOSS OF WEIGHT AND FORCE FEEDING REACH US, WE ARE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT HEALTH AND WELFARE OF PRISONERS AS WELL AS PUBLIC RELATIONS ASPECT OF CASE. IF HUNGER STRIKE CONTINUES MUCH LONGER, INCREASED MEDIA FOCUS SEEMS CERTAIN. AS YOU HAVE ALREADY NOTED, INDIAN HANDLING OF PRISONERS COULD BECOME ANOTHER IRRITANT IN RELATIONS, ESPECIALLY WITH THE CONGRESS, WHERE AID TO INDIA ALREADY IN SERIOUS TROUBLE.

2. WOULD THEREFORE LIKE CHARGE' TO REGISTER OUR CONTINUING CONCERN ABOUT DELAYS IN GETTING CASE UNDER WAY

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MORE THAN YEAR AFTER PRISONERS WERE ARRESTED. WE HAVE

SO FAR BENT OVER BACKWARD TO AVOID ANY SUGGESTION OF DISSATISFACTION WITH WAY GOI HAS HANDLED CASE IN RESPONDING TO INQUIRIES FROM PRESS. HOWEVER, WE MAY NOW FIND IT NECESSARY, UNLESS TRIAL MOVES FORWARD EXPEDITIOUSLY AND IF CONTINUING HUNGER STRIKE THREATENS HEALTH OF PRISONERS, TO EXPRESS PUBLICLY OUR DISSATISFACTION WITH MANNER GOI HAS HANDLED TRIAL OF INDIVIDUALS WHOM THEIR ATTORNEYS ALLEGE ARE DRUG SMUGGLERS;

AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN CALLED AMBASSADOR KAUL
ALONG ABOVE LINES JUNE 28.

3. IN VIEW OF POSSIBLE HEALTH PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH HUNGER STRIKE, WE WANT CALCUTTA TO SEEK CONSULAR ACCESS AS FREQUENTLY AS POSSIBLE RATHER THAN EVERY TWO WEEKS NOW AGREED BY COURT. ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE MADE TO SEE PRISONERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT IN ANY CASE OFFICIAL FROM CONSULATE SHOULD SEE PAIR AT LEAST BY JULY 5 INSTEAD OF JULY 8 PER REF B.
SISCO

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